

School Reporting Contact Newsletter

NPERS is now in the third year of PIONEER and would like to thank all of you for your continued support as the system continues to evolve. We appreciate all your questions, comments, and suggestions.

Enclosed are Recap Reports and Wage and Contribution Reports for disk and paper reporters. As we continue to strive for accurate member demographics, enclosed is a list of members reported by you. Please verify for accuracy the demographics for each member. Members without address information do not have an address in PIONEER and need to be updated. Please follow the appropriate procedures for your reporting method to add or update information.

Compensation and Eligibility – Compensation includes over-time, extra-duty, subbing (when qualified - *see page 2-1), and any compensation for services provided by an eligible employee to the school. Some salary items that are not considered compensation are unused leave, severance pay, disability paid by an insurance company, and fringe benefits converted to cash. (*For additional information on compensation see pages 3-2 & 3-3.) Contributions are **mandatory** by law to be withheld on **all** eligible compensation. Contributions are **mandatory** by law to be withheld from all **eligible employees**; retirement is **not an elective option** to eligible employees. (*See page 2-1 for eligibility requirements.) Employers are responsible and will be charged for any interest due to the members' accounts because of any late or missed contributions (this includes retro-active salaries paid because of late contract settlements).

Stipends – Report stipends as compensation that are paid to employees for services provided. Not all stipends may be considered compensation; the compensation for the stipend must be for services provided for the benefit of the school. Stipends must be included with regular salary and cannot be reported separately.

Citizenship – **Temporary residents** who do not have permanent resident alien status are **not eligible** to participate in the retirement plan. If you have reported contributions for an employee who is not a citizen or permanent resident, contact NPERS. Anyone with a status of citizen or permanent resident should have a 'Y' in the citizenship field. (*See page 2-1.)

Web File Uploading – We recommend that you do not wait until the day prior to the due date of your report to file upload. You may need extra time for internal system problems, upload complications, and editing. Please allow extra time for days off and be sure to contact us prior to an event that might cause a delay in reporting. On-line reports must be **confirmed on or before the 10th** (or the next business day should the 10th fall on a weekend or holiday) of each month to avoid penalty.

Editing - Editing and adjustments for file upload web reporters can only be done once the file is uploaded. Files uploaded on non-business days will not load until the next business night's batch run; your report would be available the following business day. Once your report has loaded, you may complete your editing without waiting overnight to confirm.

On-line Fields -

Overage/Underage – This field is for making payments or taking credits for **previous** reports that were paid over or under the actual amount due. This field is **not to be used to make your report balance** to the expected payment amount. If you have a question concerning the use of this field, please contact us.

MKUpEE, MKUpER, MKUpInt, and InstlAmt – These fields are to be used only when you have received final calculations, a payment schedule, and your copy of an irrevocable agreement from NPERS. If you are not sure if you should be using these fields, please contact us.

Irrevocable Payment Agreements - PLEASE review the entire document including the **start date** to make sure it will coincide with your payroll schedule. If there is a conflict, please notify us so changes can be made. These agreements are for an employee who wishes to purchase service or make-up contributions through payroll deduction. The agreements are legally binding between the member, employer, and NPERS.

Confirming - Please note, you have completed the confirmation process when the “unconfirm” option is available. When the “unconfirm” option is showing, you have completed the reporting process.

Hiring Retirees – To avoid jeopardizing their benefit, a retiree must wait **180 days** from the date of termination to begin providing service to any Nebraska public school on a regular basis. Within the 180 days following retirement, the amount of hours a retiree is allowed to sub is not defined; however, when a retiree is performing substitute duties during the absence of a permanent employee it **should not be on a regular basis** and should be intermittent only. In special circumstances, please write to us for a determination prior to employment. (*See Appendix-2 for the definition of substitute employee.)

Volunteering in or holding a position for a retiree is not allowed. According to Federal regulations there must be a bona fide separation from employment by a retiree. A position cannot be held open or any contractual commitments made while waiting for the completion of the 180 day break. Activity of this nature will stop a retiree's benefit payment and require the repayment of benefits received.

PENALTIES - We would much rather receive timely, accurate reports than have to write penalty letters. We are required by statute to penalize reports not received and/or confirmed by the date due. Reports must be accurate and ready to post to be considered received. If you are having trouble completing your reports correctly or on time, please contact us for assistance **prior** to the date due. Back pay and retroactive salary adjustments that are submitted in lump sums will be considered inaccurate and may be penalized. Any salaries of this nature must be attributed to the appropriate month in which they were earned.

REMINDER: Employers are responsible for any interest due to a member's account if contributions are reported late.

Miscellaneous

Hours - As summer approaches, keep in mind that hours should not be reported unless an employee is actually providing service during the summer months.

Contract Payouts/Lump Sums – Please keep us informed of the breakdown of lump sum payouts for departing employees. NOTE: Retiree benefits will not be paid any sooner because the final pay is lump sum.

Forms – Most forms can be downloaded from our web site at www.npers.ne.gov.

Checks - Please **do not staple** checks. Removing staples tends to damage paperwork.

Employer Contact Updates – For security reasons, please contact us as soon as possible if you have had a change in any of your employer contacts.

Sick and Vacation Hours - Used leave hours are to be reported with the salary. (*See page 4-1.)

E-Mails – When e-mailing NPERS, please include your school and co/dist information. It has been difficult at times to match the author to the school and research a reply.

Member Booklets - were revised 01/03. If you do not have this version or need to replenish your supply, please contact NPERS or complete an order form in the forms section of your manual.

Plan Booklet Changes – A green insert was issued January 2005 for you to include in each member plan booklet. Contact Us for additional copies.

Internet – When accessing the NPERS web site be sure to use Internet **Explorer**. Other web browsers do not always work well with our site.

If you do not pay by **ACH**, why not consider giving it a try? (One payment is allowed per report.)
No checks lost in the mail.

For web reporters, there is nothing to mail in. Once you confirm, YOU'RE DONE!

If you have corrections to a report, the correct payment amount will be withdrawn. No overage or underage amounts to worry about. Payment amounts ALWAYS match your report.

***Please reference your Manual for Employer Contacts.** This fun and exciting manual is chocked full of helpful information.

Contact US

We now have two Cheryl's at NPERS so be sure to clarify which one you need. Our new Sheryl is doing great in our Data Purification area. For reporting assistance ask for Cheryl Mueller or Cheryl in Accounting and of course Sarah is always happy to help.

Cheryl Mueller at (402) 471-9497 or e-mail cmueller@npers.ne.gov, or

Sarah Moore at (402) 471-6098 smoore@npers.ne.gov.